



2023 RITCHIE VINEYARD CHARDONNAY

Russian River Valley

TASTING NOTES

In a growing season that harkened back to the cool-climate vintages of the past, the old vines at Ritchie Vineyard showed exactly why this site belongs in the Grand Cru tier of California Chardonnay. The long, gentle 2023 season — following a winter of abundant rain — gave these nearly 50-year-old “Old Wente” vines the time they needed to slowly develop intense flavor while preserving razor-sharp natural acidity. Planted in the coveted *Goldridge* soil series on a modest, well-drained slope, the oldest block at Ritchie once again delivered a tiny crop of small, power-packed clusters.

The resulting wine is vivid and tightly coiled, with an energy that pulses from the glass. Aromas of white peach, preserved lemon, crushed oyster shell, and spring blossoms lead into a finely etched palate layered with green apple, lime oil, and stone fruit. There’s a gentle creaminess from the lees, but the wine’s core is all about purity and precision. As it unfolds in the glass, deeper notes of chamomile, baked citrus, and a wisp of salted caramel emerge — a nod to the site’s signature richness, kept perfectly in check by the vintage’s structure. The 2023 Ritchie is a wine built for the long haul, offering both clarity and quiet power.

Peak drinking window: 2027 through 2040.

VINEYARD NOTES

Kent Ritchie has owned and farmed his namesake vineyard since the early 1970s. The vineyard is located just off of River Road at the intersection of Eastside Road and Trenton Road. The location is unique because it sits on a bench at the confluence of the Russian River, the Santa Rosa Plain, and the Laguna de Santa Rosa. Each of these unique geological characteristics influences the “terroir” of the Ritchie Vineyard. The proximity to the Pacific Ocean exposes it to the cool effect of the coastal fog yet at the same time the site’s location allows for ample sunlight once the fog has burned off around noon. The well-drained, sandy, Goldridge Soils are ideal for growing Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Finally, the vineyard is predominately planted to the Old Wente Selection of Chardonnay which is highly coveted for its low yields and ability to produce an intensely flavored and aromatic wine. Kent Ritchie is a great guy and this is truly one of the grand vineyards of the Russian River Valley. It’s an honor to work with such an iconic vineyard.

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